Vol. I.] THE [Numb. 3.

Cenſor

SATURDAY, December 7, 1771.

VEXAT CENSURA COLUMBAS.

Publiſhed by E. Russell, at his Printing-Office, in Marlborough-Street; where, (if ſuitable Encouragement is offered) this Paper may be had once a Week, Price *Two Pence* per Number to Subſcribers.

To Mucius Scævola;

IN the deteſtation of your political enormities, ſuffer me to join in the publick voice: But as I can reſent your crime without any diſagreeable emotions, I ſhall go *cloſe* through this addreſs without breathing one *anathema* on the vile *perpetrator*. Could I poſſibly whiſper certain truths before ſuch an *audience* as you and I in our turn ſollicited, I ſhould be inclined to ſpare you the aggravated diſtreſs of this publick inquiſition: There are certain objects that for the pain they communicate we would gladly avoid; and one of the moſt affecting expreſſions of miſery, is that of defeated *villainy*, in its apprehenſive, creſt-fallen haggard *attitude* of *ſupplication*.——Intoxicated with the dazzling idea of *patriotiſm*, and unhappily ſeduced by the apparent facility of eſtabliſhing or diſtinguiſhing a character: you boldly embarked in the wretched confederacy; ſome ſhare of underſtanding I am ready to allow you, to vindicate the propriety of this addreſs: You preſently apprehend the moſt ſtriking features of your clamorous *co-patriots*: A pretence of zeal for the publick ſafety has for a century drowned the cry for religion and reformation:

Murmurs

Murmurs and diſcontents however groundleſs, fears and jealouſies however ill founded, are ſtill the ſucceſsful weapons of turbulent demagogues, the honeſt and illiterate unwarily catch the enthuſiaſm; diſtruſt induſtriouſly diſſeminated among the inconſiderate multitude, naturally awakens their attention; and when thoroughly alarmed with apprehenſions of danger, they ſubmit to the guidance of any *maſſaniello* to ſhun their imaginary evils.—A man unacquainted with hiſtorical facts might probably determine, that general diſcontent could never prevail without juſt provocation; that the lawleſs ambition of a few could never diſtruſt a wiſe and equal adminiſtration; that partizans whoſe characters and deſigns at beſt were but problematic could never embroil a ſtate; and would be ready to conclude that there were but tranſient vapours which would be diſperſed on the firſt ray of light--to you *Mucius* theſe ceaſed to be queſtionable, you were already apprized that from ſuch fermenting miſchief, the curſe cauſeleſs had reached the guiltleſs head; the deſolated *altar* of the unſuſpecting, the beneficent citizen diſplayed a monument of more than gothick barbarity. Thus armed *capapee* you ruſhed upon the *publick*; *hypotheſis* was but timid, rational deduction was of ſlow progreſſion, and ill-ſuited to the organs of thoſe you meant to influence: *poſitive aſſertion* and *dogmatical poſition* with a *valorous attack on Magiſtracy*, were the direct road to *popular confidence*. To fear God, and honour the King betrayed a poverty of ſpirit unworthy ſuch generous purpoſes; and to evidence an inſipid, unprovoking temper of candour and juſtice at the criſis of infatuation would but diſgrace your abilities, and defeat your intentions: The publick ear was already rendered perfectly callous to almoſt every ſpecies of abuſe and detraction; to be eminent even *Leonidas* and *Candidus* were to be glorioufly outdone; the ebullitions of rancour muſt be rendered more intenſely excruciating by the ingenious ſuggeſtions of aggravated falſhood. Perſon, character, and ſtation were the ſelect prey of this matchleſs political vulture: Hitherto the junto had raved with impunity; the random ſhafts of innoxious malice were ſtill diſregarded: The proſcribed, the inſulted Magiſtrates with the ſcorn of indignant virtue refuſed to chaſtiſe them; ſuch generous revenge was truly diſtreſſing; your ambitious phrenzy united with indigence led you to court *perſecution*; the *braying patriot* was but too ſenſible, that unleſs he was *ſo diſtinguiſhed*, his pretenſions would be received with every expreſſion of *ridicule*: The characteriſtic of Americans is to pity the unfortunate without a ſcrupulous attention to the *ſource* of their *complaints*: and it is equally the *generous frailty* of my countrymen, implicitly to ſwallow the *profeſſions* of every *ſtate mountebank*:

bank: *Mucius* was aware that a publick defaulter by ſuperlative fineſſe, and hypocrotical gravity, had flung enormous embezzlements on the publick charity: Another eminent political declamator had feaſted on the publick bounty; for reconciling the groſſeſt abſurdities, and eſtabliſhing to his own ſingular emolument, a beneficial *manufacture* without *hands*: while others *quos nunc preſcribere longum eſt*, were lifted from their native kennels, and ſhine triumphant *demagogues* in the ſubordinate *departments* of the *ſtate*: ſome noble effort muſt therefore be made, ſome violent aſſault on the inflammable paſſions of the populace; ſome giant enormity muſt be committed againſt government, or MUCIVS SCÆVOLA muſt precipitate with the dregs of ineffectual and diſappointed *incendiaries*.

HERE had you been content to remain, and have dropped the curtain over the laſt act of demented ambition, you would have ſpared yourſelf much ſevere recrimination; though the ſpirit of gentleneſs which governs the pen of the CENSOR, would rather blot than record ſuch aggravated follies: *Pomponius Atticus* tendered you his golden maxim "*engage in no factions*," but the conſiderations before-cited were irreſiſtably perſuaſive: You boldly launched forth the *Quixotte* of *faction*; the enterprize did honour to your execrable talents. The *Oſtraciſm* of *Athens*, and *Pataliſm* of *Syracuſe* were adopted with additional *malignity*, an invidious diſtaſte to ſuperiour excellence, had generally the greateſt ſhare in their *proſcriptions*; this might have ſome *covert* influence, but was not the actuating *principle* with you: To aggrandize your character by one illuſtrious *coup de main*, you propoſed the expulſion of the firſt *Magiſtrate*, and if virtue confers eminence, the firſt Citizen from the Chair: Already like a towering *Coloſſus* you had placed your majeſtick foot on ſubjugated government. Here let us pauſe, and make a few obſervations inoffenſively attempered to your elegant organs: When you have thus induſtriouſly embroiled the *ſtate*, let us ſuppoſe that you ſucceed in your endeavours to remove a *faithful ſervant of the crown*, will this compoſe the general uneaſineſs? Do we not unhappily experience that the fermenting choler is prepared to diſcharge itſelf on his innocent ſucceſſion? Will not the ſame principle, call it *envy*, *love of liberty*, *impatience of controul*, or by what name you pleaſe; which operated in the ſtates beforementioned, and expelled every *citizen* whoſe fame or power overtoped the reſt; will not the ſame ruinous principle I ſay forever raiſe enemies againſt the leading member of a ſtate, however moderate in the exerciſe of authority? Would you contentedly intruſt the

ſafety

ſafety of your perſon and property to an uncontroulable popular diſcretion? Is it not therefore prudent and ſound policy, to cheriſh and cultivate ſentiments of reverence and obedience to rulers; in order to preſerve that due ſubordination in ſociety; without which anarchy muſt aſſuredly enſue? admitting then that the SOVEREIGN by a judicious and temperate exertion of *prerogative*, for the general good of the empire, at the ſame time religiouſly obſerving the *condition* of the *charter*; ſhould introduce ſome innovation diſguſtful to the people, and they by their levity, and rebellious diſpoſition ſhould endeavour to throw things into confuſion: would they not thereby prove themſelves totally unfit for any ſtate, but that of abſolute ſlavery and ſubjection?